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ABSTRACT

An "ad hoc" questionnaire was administered to 10 students from each of 10 student groups. Each group's behavior was rated according to its degree of deviation from the established code of conduct for organized campus groups. Demographic and sociometric data was collected, as well as a measurement of the respondents' knowledge about the campus, and a ranking of each organization's stated priority for serving society, education, and campus community, or itself. Results show that organized group behavior is affected by intergroup interactions under certain conditions, namely length of members' time on campus, knowledge of the campus, the range of a group's contacts with other groups, the group's inception date, and the academic major of group members. The direction of extreme organized group behavior, either conventional or aggressive, is determined by the degree of generational conflict and by family background and structure. A reaction to the findings, by a different author, is included. (TL)

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BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENCES AMONG SELECTED ORGANIZED STUDENT GROUPS

by

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The Problem

"Rah, rah, rah! --- On strike, tear it down! --- Go team go! We're number one! --- Free speech! ---." These cries and many others have been heard on campuses across the nation. Coincided with these cries are a variety of behaviors generated by organized student groups. Some of these groups operate in typically traditional manners, and others choose to use more forceful and novel tactics in achieving essentially very similar objectives. Why is there such differences? To what can one attribute these differences?

Newcomb and his associates provided some clues to this dilemma, based on their study of peer groups. The schematic illustration on the next page shows the variables involved and their respective relationships to peer group formation and behavior. Lewis S. Feuer, in his book, The Conflict of Generations, stated that differences in behavior from generation to generation to a great extent are due to the degree of conflict or harmony which exists between generations at any given time. A third explanation comes from the study of the relationship of family background and child-rearing practices to individual behavior. Prime

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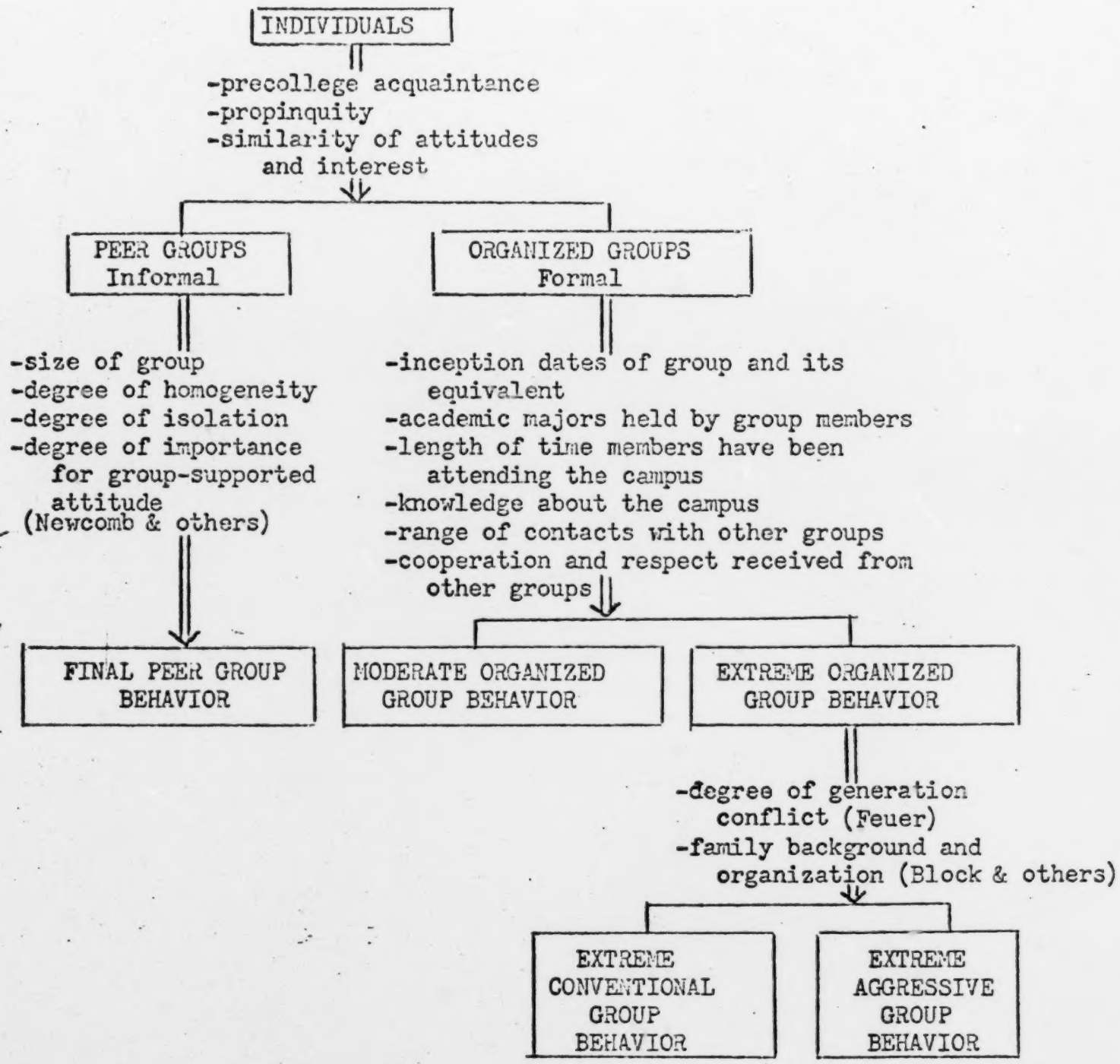
Schematic Illustration of the Variables Involved
in Determining Group Behavior


INDIVIDUALS
-precollege acquaintance
-propinquity
-similarity of attitudes and interest
PEER GROUPS Informal
ORGANIZED GROUPS Formal
-size of group
-degree of homogeneity
-degree of isolation
-degree of importance for group-supported attitude (Newcomb & others)
-inception dates of group and its equivalent
-academic majors held by group members
-length of time members have been attending the campus
-knowledge about the campus
-range of contacts with other groups
-cooperation and respect received from other groups
FINAL PEER GROUP BEHAVIOR
MODERATE ORGANIZED GROUP BEHAVIOR
EXTREME ORGANIZED GROUP BEHAVIOR
-degree of generation conflict (Feuer)
-family background and organization (Block & others)
EXTREME CONVENTIONAL GROUP BEHAVIOR
EXTREME AGGRESSIVE GROUP BEHAVIOR

contributors to this line of study include Jean Block, Norma Haan, M. Brewster Smith, William Westley and Nathan B. Epstein.

There is little, if any, study done on behavior of organized student groups. Are there any differences between organized and peer or informal group behavior? Do organized student group members behave differently when they are representing the group as opposed to themselves as individuals? This study attempts to explore the variables involved in determining organized group behavior.

More specifically, this study focuses on the relationship of organized group behavior to four areas. Organized group behavior refers to the overt acts performed by group members with the consent of the group to carry out certain group objectives. The areas to be studied in relationship to organized group behavior include (1) the demographic characteristics of each organized student group, (2) interaction patterns among organized student groups and other significant groups, (3) adjustment and adaptability of each group to the campus culture, and (4) the range of issues and contacts engaged by each group.

The Study

The study was done on a campus of a western state college located in an urban setting with a substantially heterogeneous student enrollment. The setting was chosen

for it had both the traditional and the newer elements of organized student activities on campus. Neither element, however, dominates over the other as may be found on other campuses.

Ten organized student groups, representing the range of behavior to be studied made up the sample. By organized student group, it refers to a collection of individual students who have come together for a specific reason or reasons and have given themselves a name, an identity as a group. The sample groups were all formally registered with the college as campus organizations, as defined by campus codes. The sample groups included: one elected branch of student government, two politically-oriented groups, two service-oriented groups, two social groups, two separate cultural ethnic groups and one mixed minority group.

Only ten members from each group were asked to participate. These members were chosen on the basis of their standing in their respective organizations in terms of their ability to lead and to influence their fellow members and their high level of involvement and activities in the organization. The judge for these qualities were left to the general membership of the groups. This selectivity of respondents was intended to accentuate possible differences among variables which may be related to group behavior. It was done also under the assumption that these members were the ones who actually determine the course of their organized group behavior.

A questionnaire designed for this study was then administered to the selected respondents. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire at the student activities office. Upon completion, each questionnaire was collected immediately to assure high percentage of return. Each respondent was asked to work independently on the questionnaire and not to discuss its content or response with anyone else. All data, except for the determination of group behavior, were obtained through the questionnaire within a week's time. The determination of group behavior was done by judges based on a prescribed set of criteria.

An ordinal scale was devised for the purpose of locating the behavior of each group in relation to the other groups. It was designed to measure the degree of deviation from the established official code of conduct for organized student groups on any given campus. On one extreme was the behavior of a conventional student group. Specifically, the following characteristics applied to this extreme:

-the group respected the college administration and faculty on all matters concerning the college, higher education and student welfare.

-it viewed the administration and the faculty as authorities on matter regarding education and student welfare.

-it generally concurred with the established policies, rules and structure without questions.

-it seldom, if ever, initiated requests or recommendations for changes of the established collegiate structure.

-the activities of the group blended into traditional campus activities and, therefore, required no special attention or arrangement on other parts of the college community.

On the other extreme was the behavior of an aggressive student group depicted by the following characteristics:

-the group looked to the college administration and faculty as barriers to progress, archaic in thoughts and bureaucratic in practice with minimal interest in the students and their welfare.

-it viewed themselves as more informed, at least as equally informed, as the administration and the faculty on matters regarding education and student welfare.

-it publicly confronted the "establishment" and sometimes totally disregarded established policies, rules and structure.

-it frequently made demands for changes of the collegiate structure.

-the activities of the group were generally vociferous, gregarious, aggressive and unusual, therefore, tended to be imposing and disruptive to an otherwise traditional quiet campus community.

The ten selected organized student groups were then placed somewhere on the scale based on their respective activities and reputation on campus. The ranking was

independently done by four judges who worked closely with these groups on an advisory basis as assigned by the college. Since all four judges ranked the groups similarly, no further decision was necessary to place the groups on the scale. Consequently, Group A became the group which was ranked as the most conventional group fitting the first set of characteristics. Group B became the second most conventional group, and so on with Group J as the most aggressive of the ten sample groups.

Because the name of each sample group was to be kept confidential, the capital letters A through J were adopted as names of the groups and as an indication to their relative positions on the ordinal scale depicting group behavior.

The questionnaire was written to elicit the rest of the information required for this study. They yield the following kinds of information:

1. a collection of demographic characteristics including age, sex, marital status, academic standing, major and length of attendance at the campus. A demographic description of each group was then derived. Information on family background, socio-economic and cultural factors would have been interesting. However, because they are sensitive subjects to some of the sample groups, they were not included.
2. two socio-grams depicting the inter-group and interpersonal relationships among the sample groups and other selected groups, including the college

administration, the faculty, off-campus affiliated groups and other off-campus groups.

3. a measurement of the amount and nature of knowledge possessed by each respondent and as a group about the college campus. For example, where do you go to get a grade changed? Who has the final authority in determining who can speak on campus? and so on. This measurement was intended to reflect each group's ability to operate and maneuver in a given campus culture, based on the assumption that the more familiar one is about a given situation, the more able he is to deal with it. (McEvoy, 1968)
4. a ranking of each organization's order of priority if they had to choose to serve only some of the four entities--namely the society-at-large, the institution of higher education, the local campus community, and the organization to which each respondent belongs. It was felt that group behavior would differ significantly among those who think of their organization over the society-at-large.

Findings

Ninety-seven percent of the questionnaires were returned and were usable.

Demographic characteristics of group members considered in this study, namely age, marital status, academic status

and academic major, did not reveal any new information in relation to group behavior. Specifically, there were no consistent relationships between group behavior and age, marital status and academic status. The findings on academic major were consistent with other studies, namely nonethnically based activities tend to be interested in the arts and social sciences, especially the latter.

The length of attendance at the college, however, had a definite curvilinear relationship with group behavior, with members from moderate groups (those groups appearing on the mid-section of the ordinal group behavior scale) being on campus longer than those from the extreme groups (those appearing on either end of the ordinal scale). Along a similar line of consideration, traditional groups, referring to those founded before the 1960's, tended to behave in a conventional fashion while the newer arrivals tended to behave in a more aggressive manner, with the exception of Group A which was founded after 1960 but has a basic objective of preserving the American tradition.

Group and individual interaction patterns were consistent in terms of frequency. Moderate groups on the whole had more contacts with other student groups than the extreme groups. However, based on the Spearman rank order correlation, the correlation between group interaction and group behavior, and frequency of inter-personal contacts with individuals in other student groups and group behavior have very low rho-values between them. On the other hand,

moderate groups also had more contacts with the administration and the faculty than the extreme groups. Frequency of interaction with off-campus groups, however, was distinguished along the line of traditional campus groups and the newer arrivals, the latter groups having more contacts with off-campus groups.

Groups with similar behavior patterns attracted each other more so than with the other groups. The two extremes were, therefore, generally rejected or self-isolated. As for attractions to the administration and the faculty, all groups except Group A desired more contacts, with the moderates expressing a greater degree than the extremes.

Contrary to findings from other studies, there appeared no consistent relationship between frequency of interaction between groups and favorable effects on attitude change toward each other. There is, however, a significant positive correlation between frequency of group interaction and cooperation and respect received from each other among these groups.

The results also supported a relationship between the amount and nature of knowledge possessed by each group about the campus culture and group behavior. It was found that the moderate groups know more than the extreme groups about those aspects of campus which were of interest to the respective groups.

Finally, the results provided little support to the possible relationship between group behavior and the range

of contacts and between group behavior and the order of organizational priorities. Only one of three sets of data collected for testing this relationship provided any significant support. That was, the range of contacts a group has with other organized groups was related to group behavior with the moderates having the largest number of contacts with different groups. It is believed that the meager support for this relationship may be due to the inadequacy of the measuring instrument rather than an actual lack of relationship.

Viewing from the basis of traditional groups, those founded before 1960 and the newer groups with the exception of Group A, there were several distinct differences in characteristics. In comparison to the traditional groups, members from the new arrivals have been on campus less time, know less about the campus and have encountered more frustrating, exasperating experiences on campus. On the whole, new arrivals had more outside contacts than the traditional groups. They also tended to deal more with the faculty and the administration, but only on group business as opposed to friendly exchanges. Mostly, the new arrivals turned to their own groups or outside groups for consultation and advice.

In the exploration of relationship among variables considered in this study, six independent variables have been identified as having a positive correlation with group behavior ranging from extreme to moderate behavior,

putting groups appearing on both extremes of the behavior scale on the lower end and those appearing in the middle on the other end. Table I shows the nature of their relationships, using a multiple correlation calculation for the six independent variables and organized group behavior as the dependent variable.

Caution should be made at this point to treat the results as only approximations. Because of the small sample and the large number of variables under consideration, the statistical procedure used in determining the multiple correlation capitalizes on any chance deviations that favor high multiple correlation. Therefore, the percentages noted on the table reflect the maximum possible effect each variable has on group behavior.

Conclusions

Though the findings are somewhat tentative, some conclusions can be reached, adding to the pool of knowledge on factors effecting individual and group behavior. As is illustrated earlier, the findings of this study can be integrated into findings made by others reviewed briefly earlier.

In summary, it has been found that individuals form into informal peer groups and organized groups as determined predominantly by precollege acquaintance, propinquity of individuals and similarity of attitudes and interests of individuals as noted by Newcomb and others. The final

TABLE 1

Relative Contribution of Selected Independent Variables to Group Behavior Orientation

Independent Variable	Direct Contribution[a]	
Length of Attendance at the College	36%	
Frequency of Interaction Among Student Groups	2%	
Mean Proportion of Friends from other Student Groups	1%	
Cooperation and Respect Received from other Student Groups	7%	
Knowledge about the Campus of Interest to the Group	10%	
Range of Contacts	29%	85%
Indirect Contribution as Result of Interrelations among the above Variables = $(R^2 - \Sigma B^2_{IK})^b$		7%
Unaccounted Contribution Made by Factors other than the Above		8%
		100%

[a]This is determined by the Beta coefficient squared, derived from the multiple correlation calculations for the above seven variables, with group behavior as the dependent variable. For more detailed explanation of its derivation, refer to Guildford (1965), pp. 392-416.

[b]R = Coefficient of Multiple Correlation.

behavior of informal peer groups is in turn determined by the size of group, the degree of homogeneity, the degree of isolation from others and the degree of importance for group-supported attitude, again noted by Newcomb and his associates. Though it may be affected by some of the same variables as found in peer group behavior, organized group behavior is predominantly affected by interactions among organized groups under certain conditions noted in this study, namely length of time members attended the campus, knowledge about the campus possessed by and of interest to the group, the range of group contacts with other groups, the level of cooperation and respect received from other groups, the group's inception date, and academic major of group members. Finally, the direction of extreme organized group behavior, be it extreme-conventional behavior or extreme-aggressive behavior, is determined by the degree of generational conflict as noted by Feuer and by the kinds of family background and structure from which these group members gather, as noted by Block, Haan, Smith, Epstein and Westley.

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A REACTION TO BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENCES AMONG SELECTED ORGANIZED STUDENT GROUPS

by

Margaret J. Barr

Several significant characteristics among organized groups have been delineated in the study. Three points were raised which are pertinent to student activities specialists:

1. The relationship of organized groups to the administration and faculty regarding education and student welfare.
2. The length of attendance by group members at the institution and the effect this has on the group.
3. The effect of lack of knowledge about the campus and the contribution this makes to the determination of group behavior.

Point number one raises significant questions regarding the kind of interaction which occurs between students and members of the administration and faculty. From the observation of this writer, our organized student activities office appears to devote much of their time and effort in working with traditional campus groups. We make little or no effort within our institutional role to get involved with the numerous action oriented groups springing up on

our campuses. This lack of institutional control causes two effects: (1) traditional student activities are on the wane and the professional activities staff find themselves spending more time in actual organization and presentation of events. In some senses these programs become staff activitiy programs. (2) We need to develop new modes of working with students whose interests do not fit into the traditional model for activity programs. Active support, encouragement, and help should be given to student groups attempting to set up a free university system or a tutorial program. Faculty and administration members who have become involved with these less traditional groups tend to do so more on the basis of their personal interest rather than their institutional position. The "Young Turks" on the faculty have provided much of the leadership and focus for these groups. If student personnel workers do not reach out to these groups, there is no communication. We need to review our policies and procedures governing organized groups and their activities. Guidelines must be developed which allow for spontaneous activities to occur within the system. Lack of flexibility in dealing with less traditional groups creates the perfect climate for confrontation.

Point two raises the question on the length of attendance at the institution and the effect this has on less traditional groups. It appears that students who transfer into our institutions do not fit into our more traditionally organized groups. The four-year pattern of

group membership is not reality for many students. Change in class status of new students has affected the system of fraternity and sororities. Transfer students cannot pledge their freshman year and then have three more years of group membership. Secondarily, the traditional modes of pledging and initiation seem to hold less appeal to students with previous experience at another institution.

The length of attendance of group members also affects point number three, which means that students do not understand the system. This lack of knowledge due to newness or inadequate orientation leads to frustration. Therefore, the institution can only be dealt with as a frustrating symbol rather than as a group of individuals working collectively for a common goal. We need to effectively teach all students how the college or university operates and where the decision-making power is vested. If this means honesty in the area of budget and legislative opinion--then let us be honest. Lack of candor on the part of college administration only increases distrust and misinformation. Orientation programs should be revamped with this as a prime focus.

At one campus the Black Students are concerned with lack of viable institutional support for a Black Studies program. They see inaction where there should be movement and no money where funds should be poured into a program. On the other hand, the college has given more money to this program than any other program in the history of the college.

It is a classic case of where the traditionalists are saying we have done all we can and the aggressive group is saying that is not enough. Honestly facing these students with a thorough review of the budget, state rulings on expenditures and the other factors in making the administrative decision might have avoided this confrontation. The black student may still feel it is not enough, but at least they would understand where the real problem lies.

The study under consideration does have validity and gives us guidelines for future development of institutional relationships to organized groups. It is true that we have less trouble with traditional groups. Perhaps this is true because we have troubled more about them instead of washing our hands and saying we cannot cope.

Our job is to help all student groups flourish in a university environment of healthy respect for one another and for their individual differences as groups. In addition, we must support an atmosphere of self-respect of individual group members and part of a larger community.